

The Unified Scriptures

The Story of the Bible

North Hixson church of Christ

January – March 2014

Lesson 9: Home Again Heroes

Ezra, Nehemiah

*Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: the coming
days of promise*

Course Objectives

- To grow in our knowledge and understanding of the facts, themes, and principles of scripture. (2 Tim 3:15)
- To gain confidence in the inspiration of the Bible and its power to change our lives. (Heb. 4:12)
- To increase our faith and hope in God and His wisdom. (1 Peter 1:21)
- To equip ourselves with the ability to tell the story of the Bible to others. (Mark 16:15)





Moses



Jesus



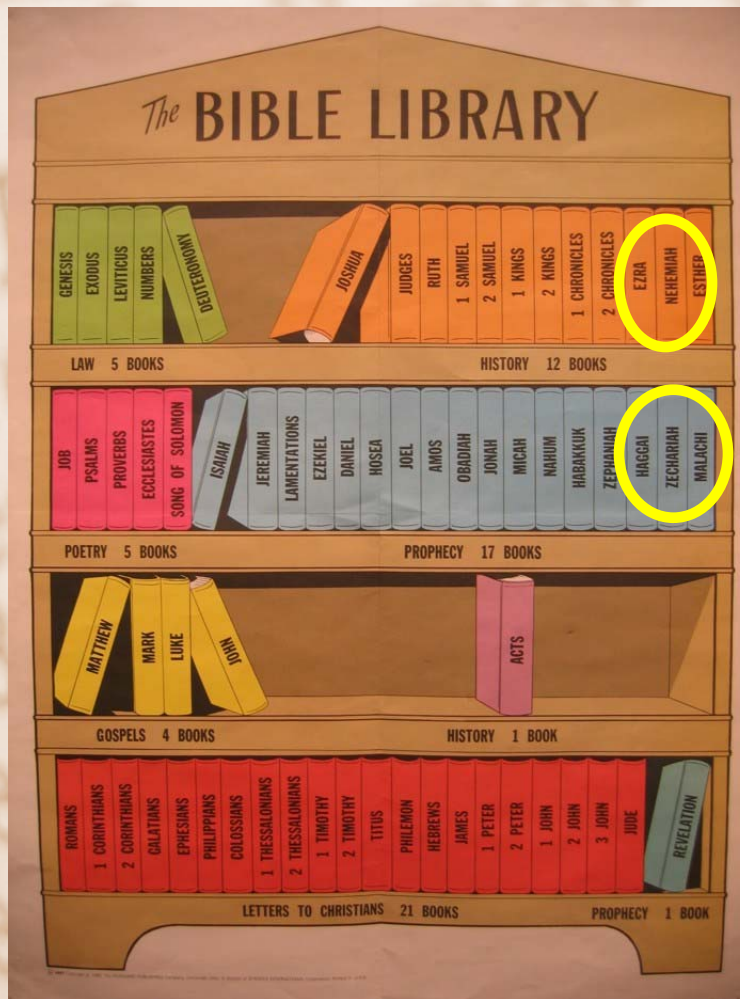
Beginning

~1400
B.C.

536 - 400
B.C.

A.D.
33

A.D.
2014



Return From Captivity

- **Reason for Captivity**
 - Primary reason - Idolatry Jer 25:4-7
- **Captivity Foretold, Return Promised**
 - Captivity – Jer 25:8-12
 - Return – Jeremiah’s letter – Jer 29:1,4-7,10
- **God Keeps His Promise**
 - Daniel 9:1-6,18-19
 - Cyrus issues a decree to build the temple in Jerusalem – Ezra 1:1-8
 - First return to Judea – 42,636 people – 536 BC
 - The return is lead by Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua (Joshua), the high priest

Rebuilding a Nation

■ Rebuilding the Temple

- Worship is restored, foundation of the temple is laid – Ezra 3
- Rebuilding opposed by surrounding nations (Samaritans), the work stops for 10 years or so – Ezra 4

■ Encouragement from the Prophets

- Haggai and Zechariah prophesy to the people, the work restarts – Ezra 5:1,2
- Haggai 1:3-5;2:1-9; Zech 3:1,8-10; 6:12-13; 9:9,10

■ Temple rebuilt!

- Ezra 6:13-16



Rebuilding a Nation

■ Ezra Returns to Judea

- 7:6 – Skilled scribe,
- 7:10 Ezra's character
- Second return to Judea nearly 60 years later – 458 BC

■ Nehemiah Returns

- 13 years after Ezra's return, a third return of people led by Nehemiah – 444 BC
- Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem
- Re-inhabiting Jerusalem to become a thriving city

■ Spiritual Restoration

- Ezra works to restore the people to God's law Neh 8:2-8
 - Feast of Tabernacles (Neh 8:13-18)
 - Intermarriage (Ezra 9,10)
- The remedy for their sins was to return to the Law of God





Close of the Old Testament

■ Malachi

- Perhaps 100 years after the first return – 420 BC
- Hearts of the people are not with the Lord 1:6-14
- Promises for the future
 - 3:1-3
 - 4:1-6

■ Years of Silence

- Between Malachi and Matthew are about 400 years when God recording nothing in the Scriptures
- “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD.” Amos 8:11

400 Years of Bible Silence

- Persian rule at the end of the OT
- Judea in relative peace, much worship was technically correct, hearts not in it
- 330 BC Alexander the Great conquers Persia and most of the known world, installs Hellenist (Grecian) culture
- Alexander dies at 33, kingdom is not strong and divided, Seleucids rule Israel – most of 200's
- Maccabean Revolt occurs when Seleucids try to eliminate Jewish worship and assert Greek idolatry
- Israel somewhat autonomous, monotheistic worship – 164 through 65 BC
- Rome becoming more dominant, growing stronger





400 Years of Bible Silence

- 64 BC Rome conquers the Seleucids
- Rome conquers Israel in 40 BC and installs Herod the Great as King of the Jews
- Under Herod the Jews were free to practice their religion but were governed by Rome
- This sets the stage for the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy


“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Daniel 2:44

Significant Developments

- Greek Language
 - Became the common business language
 - Many spoke Greek plus their own native language
- Synagogues
 - Sprang up during exile in Babylon
 - Local centers for reading and teaching the Law
 - Became the launching point for spreading the gospel
- “The Writings”
 - Written interpretations of the Old Testament
 - Created divisions: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes
- Septuagint (LXX)
 - Translation of Hebrews Old Testament into Greek
 - Many quotes, including those by Jesus, were from LXX
- Samaritans

Lessons

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- God's plan in Jesus will be accomplished
 - He uses those who will be faithful to accomplish His will and lead His people
 - Jeremiah – in Jerusalem
 - Ezekiel – among the captives in Babylon
 - Daniel – in the king's palace in Babylon
 - Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, Zechariah
 - Ezra, Nehemiah
 - Malachi
 - Each accomplishing God's plan in Jesus
 - **Am I part of God's plan?**

Next Week

Lesson 9:

Christ: God's Great Plan (part 1)

"Show us the Father": Jesus, God with us

